

## Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 TEL AV 09575 280854Z  
ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W  
-----118473 280859Z /23

Z O 280827Z JUL 78  
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV  
TO USUN NEW YORK FLASH 5882  
SECSTATE WASHDC FLASH 4476  
INFO AMEMBASSY BEIURT IMMEDIATE  
AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE  
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE  
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE  
AMEMBASSY AMMAN PRIORITY

S E C R E T TEL AVIV 9575

EXDIS -- DIST AS NODIS

USUN FOR THE SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR  
JERUSALEM FOR ATHERTON

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: OVIP (VANCE, CYRUS), MILI, MASS, LE, IS  
SUBJECT: SECRETARY'S MESSAGE FOR BEGIN REGARDING MILITARY SHIPMENTS  
TO LEBANESE CHRISTIANS

REF: USUN NY 3041

1. I READ TEXT OF YOUR MESSAGE TO PRIME MINISTER BEGIN  
BY TELEPHONE AT 0700 JULY 28. HE LISTENED CAREFULLY,  
SAID IT WAS A VERY IMPORTANT MESSAGE AND THAT HE TOOK  
EXTREMELY SERIOUSLY YOUR VIEWS AND RECOMMENDATIONS,  
AS HE KNEW YOU WERE TOTALLY DEDICATED TO THE SEARCH FOR  
PEACE IN LEBANON AND IN THE MIDDLE EAST. BEGIN ASKED ME TO  
SEND THE TEXT TO HIM AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, SINCE HE WANTED  
TO CONVENE A MEETING OF HIS COLLEAGUES AT 10 A.M. THIS  
MORNONG TO DISCUSS YOUR MESSAGE. THE TEXT WAS DELIVERED  
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TO HIM AT 0930 IN JERUSALEM. HE PROMISED TO HAVE A  
RESPONSE FOR YOU LATER THIS MORNING.

2. AT PREVIOUSLY SCHEDULED MEETING WITH EZER WEIZMAN  
(CONCERNING LEBANESE TROOP DEPLOYMENTS TO SOUTH LEBANON),  
WHICH BEGAN AT 0815, WEIZMAN ASKED ME WHAT HE WAS BEING  
SUMMONED TO JERUSALEM ABOUT THIS MORNING. I TOLD HIM OF

YOUR MESSAGE TO BEGIN AND BEGIN'S INTENTION TO DISCUSS IT WITH HIM AND OTHER COLLEAGUES AT 10 A.M. I STRESSED TO WEIZMAN THE HIGHLY PROVOCATIVE NATURE OF THE DECISION TO SEND TANKS AT THIS POINT, AND URGED HIM TO ACCEPT YOUR RECOMMENDATION TO DELAY THIS SHIPMENT TO GIVE TIME FOR FURTHER NEGOTIATION TO TAKE PLACE WITH THE SYRIANS.

3. WEIZMAN IMMEDIATELY AGREED WITH MY POINT\* HE SAID THAT HE HAD NO TROUBLE IN HOLDING OFF IN SHIPPING THE TANKS, WHICH MERELY CONFIRMED MY SUSPICION THAT YESTERDAY'S DECISION WAS A POLITICAL DECISION, NOT A MILITARY ONE, AND PROBABLY TAKEN AGAINST WEIZMAN' ADVICE AND BETTER JUDGMENT. WHILE WE WERE TALKING THE TELEPHONE RANG FOR WEIZMAN. IT WAS THE PRIME MINISTER. WHEN HE HUNG UP TO TOLD ME IN "OFF THE RECORD FASHION" THAT HE HAD AGREED WITH THE PM'S JUDGEMENT THAT THEY SHOULD ACCEDE TO YOUR REQUEST AND HOLD OFF ON THE TANK SHIPMENT. CONSEQUENTLY, WEIZMAN SAID IT WOULD NOT BE NECESSARY FOR HIM TO GO TO JERUSALEM AFTER ALL. HE SAID I SHOULD NOT LET ON I KNEW OF THIS DECISION UNTIL IT WAS CONVEYED TO ME LATER ON TODAY BY THE PRIME MINISTER.

4. OBVIOUSLY, YOUR MESSAGE IS HAVING THE DESIRED EFFECT. WITH BOTH BEGIN AND WEIZMAN I STRESSED THE STRONG REPRESENTATIONS WE HAVE BEEN MAKING WITH THE SYRIANS  
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AND THE NEED TO AVOID PROVOCATIONS FROM THE CHRISTIAN SIDE. WEIZMAN ADMITTED TO ME THIS MORNING THAT THEY SHARE OUR JUDGEMENT ABOUT THE ORIGINS OF THE LATEST CYCLE OF BOMBARDMENT: THAT IT WAS IN RESPONSE TO MARONITE PROVOCATION. NONETHELESS, IT IS CLEAR THAT WHENEVER THIS TYPE OF BOMBARDMENT CONTINUES VERY LONG THE POLITICAL PRESSURES WITHIN AND ON THE GOVERNMENT TO RESPOND WITH TANGIBLE SUPPORT FOR THE CHRISTIANS MOUNTS VERY RAPIDLY. YOUR MESSAGE HAS EVIDENTLY STAVED OFF THE TANK SHIPMENT FOR THE TIME BEING. IF, HOWEVER, THE BOMBARDMENT BEGINS AGAIN AND THE "DESPERATE APPEALS" FROM THE MARONITE LEADERS AGAIN DESCEND ON BEGIN, WE WILL HAVE THE SAME ISSUE AGAIN TO DEAL WITH.

5. POST SCRIPT: BEGIN TELEPHONE ME AT 0945 TO CONFIRM THE DECISION NOW REACHED AS A RESULT OF HIS TELEPHONE CONSULTATIONS WITH HIS CABINET COLLEAGUES. HE SAID THAT THE ISRAELIS WOULD WITHHOLD SENDING ANY TANKS, BUT WOULD HAVE TO SHIP AMMUNITION AND LIGHT ARMS SINCE THE MARONITE FORCES WERE RUNNING DANGEROUSLY LOW OF AMMUNITION FOR SELF DEFENSE.

HE SAID THAT HE WANTED TO STAY IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH US  
IN THE NEXT DAYS ON THE LEBANESE SITUATION AND WOULD  
WISH TO CONSULT THOROUGHLY WITH YOU WHEN YOU ARRIVE  
IN JERUSALEM NEXT WEEKEND.

6. FORMAL RESPONSE TO YOUR MESSAGE WILL BE TRANSMITTED  
VIA ISRAELI EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON. GIST OF THE RESPONSE  
WILL BE AS DESCRIBED IN THE PREVIOUS PARAGRAPH.  
LEWIS

SECRET

NNN

## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 jan 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** CHRISTIANS, DIPLOMATIC COMMUNICATIONS, ARMS SHIPMENTS, CAT-B  
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**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 28 jul 1978  
**Decaption Date:** 01 jan 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
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**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
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**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
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**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
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**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** SECRETARY'S MESSAGE FOR BEGIN REGARDING MILITARY SHIPMENTS TO LEBANESE CHRISTIANS  
**TAGS:** PSDC, OVIP, MILI, MASS, US, IS, LE, (VANCE, CYRUS R), (BEGIN, MENAHEM)  
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**Type:** TE  
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**Review Markings:**  
Sheryl P. Walter  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
20 Mar 2014  
**Markings:** Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014